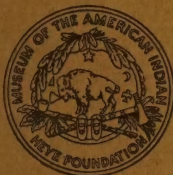


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# INDIAN NOTES AND MONOGRAPHS

EDITED BY F. W. HODGE

No.



47

A SERIES OF PUBLICA-  
TIONS RELATING TO THE  
AMERICAN ABORIGINES

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## POTTERY AND OTHER ARTIFACTS FROM CAVES IN BRITISH HONDURAS AND GUATEMALA

BY

GREGORY MASON

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NEW YORK  
MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN  
HEYE FOUNDATION  
1928

THIS series of INDIAN NOTES AND MONOGRAPHS is devoted to the publication of the results of studies by members of the staff and by collaborators of the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, and is uniform with HISPANIC NOTES AND MONOGRAPHS, published by the Hispanic Society of America, with which organization this Museum is in cordial coöperation.

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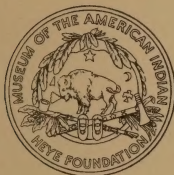
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BROADWAY AT 155TH ST.  
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## POTTERY AND OTHER ARTIFACTS FROM CAVES IN BRITISH HON- DURAS AND GUATEMALA

BY GREGORY MASON

THE Museum has recently come into possession of a collection of artifacts, mostly pottery, found in caves in British Honduras and Guatemala by the Mason-Blodgett Expedition, which left New York on February 4, 1928, and returned on June 19 after making archeological, ethnological, and zoölogical collections in Mexico, British Honduras, and Guatemala.

The Museum provided the writer with funds for the collection of ethnologic materials. The Museum of Comparative Zoölogy of Harvard University made a substantial contribution toward the expenses of Mr. Oliver L. Austin, Jr., the expedition's naturalist. The general expenses and the cost of the archeological work were met by equal contributions from Mr. Thomas H. Blodgett, President of the American Chicle Company, Mr. Bartlett Arkell, President of the Beechnut Packing Company, and myself. Liberal assistance in the form of transportation and food was given by Mr. Sheldon S. Yates, President of the Chicle Development Com-

## 6 ARTIFACTS FROM CAVES

pany, who was himself a very able and *simpatico* member of the field party. My warm thanks are due Messrs. Blodgett, Arkell, and Yates for their generous approval of my wish that the modest archeological collection which we were fortunate enough to make should go to the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation; or rather, that half of it go to the Museum. The Government of British Honduras retains title to the other half, but thanks are due to the Governor and Council of the Colonial Government for graciously lending this half to the Museum for one year. At the expiration of that time it is to be lent to the British Museum for an indefinite period.

I shall not here descant upon what the expedition did in the exploration of several surface sites nor in the excavation of burial mounds, but shall confine myself to a description of the archeology of the caves above mentioned.

One of these caves is fifteen miles up the Rio Chocon from its mouth on the Golfete, in the Izabal district of Guatemala. This had been looted by persons from Livingston some time before our arrival, and although I heard of large incensarios having been carried away, the only object of note which we found, besides coarse sherds of a common type, was the vase, since reconstructed, of a tolerably thin, almost lead-colored ware, with lateral and diagonal incised lines (fig. 1, *b*). This has a base diameter of  $4\frac{7}{8}$  inches.



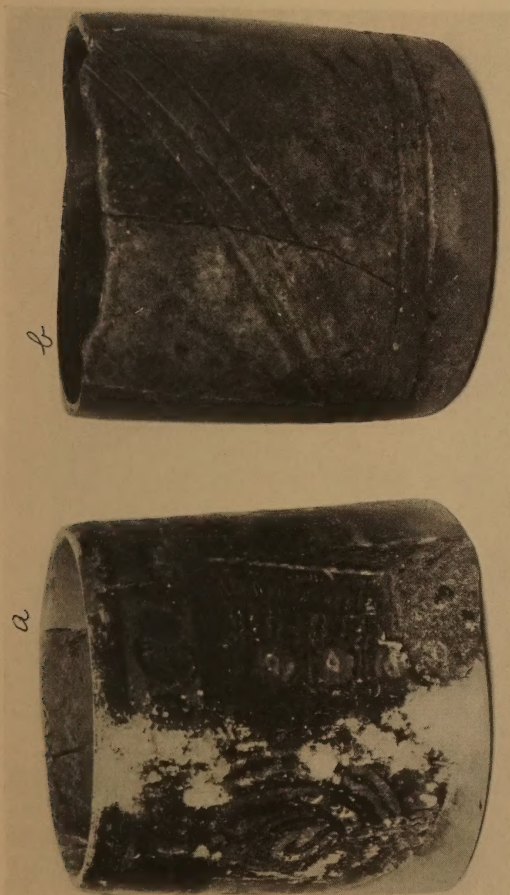


FIG. 1.—*a*, Vase from Cave A, 12 miles southeast by east of Benque Viejo, District of Cayo, British Honduras. *b*, Vase from cave on Rio Chocon, Izabal district, Guatemala. Basal diameter of *b*,  $4\frac{1}{8}$  in. (16/1862, 1863)

## 8 ARTIFACTS FROM CAVES

The other four caves are in the southern part of the Cayo district of British Honduras. Three of them, close together and forming what I consider



FIG. 2.—Vessel from Chikin Ac Tun, "Western Cave," 9 miles west of Rio Frio caves, District of Cayo. Height, 5 in.

one site and have called the "Rio Frio caves," are about twelve miles southeast by east of Benque Viejo and eleven and a half miles east of the Guatemalan border. One of them is traversed by and



FIG. 3.—Fragment of a chocolate-pot from Chikin Ak Tun cave, 9 miles west of Rio Frio. Extreme height of fragment,  $4\frac{1}{8}$  in.

## 10 ARTIFACTS FROM CAVES

the other two are within a mile of the Rio Frio, sometimes called Pinola creek, which has its origin in the Great Southern Pine Ridge and flows into the Eastern branch of the Old or Belize river above El Cayo. They are in old mahogany forest on the

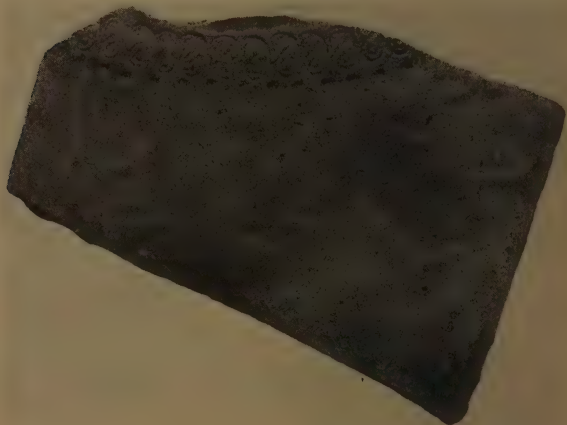


FIG. 4.—Sherd from Chikin Ak Tun cave, 9 miles west of Rio Frio caves, District of Cayo. Length, 5½ in. (16/1833)

edge of a part of the Great Southern Pine Ridge called Agustín, which is an abandoned cattle ranch. The fourth cave, which seems to have been the center of a settlement marked by remains of many agricultural terraces, I have called *Chikin Ac Tun*, or "Western cave," for no better reason than that

it is close to the western boundary of British Honduras and about nine miles west of the Rio Frio group.

This fourth cave is of the wide-mouthed type, the entrance being some sixty feet high and a hundred feet wide. It is dry, and large enough to have housed 300 to 400 Indians comfortably. Potsherds were scattered plentifully throughout the cavern, and especially in subdivisions off the rear and sides of it. In one of these small chambers we found the complete pot illustrated in fig. 2. This is 5 inches high, 5 inches in diameter through the thickest part, and  $3\frac{3}{4}$  inches at the mouth. It is of smooth, fairly thick ware of a sort of mottled tan color with a simple black painted geometric design faintly visible around the upper half. Other finds in this cave were part of a chocolate-pot (fig. 3) and two sherds bearing the clearly stamped design illustrated on the piece shown in fig. 4.

The Rio Frio caves, or two of them at least, afforded much more voluminous treasure; Cave B, which is of the wide-mouthed variety, is the smallest of the three in this group, has no water supply, and yielded only common rough sherds without design. However, some 200 yards away, across a little cañon, and higher up the face of the opposite hill, is the mouth of the really remarkable cavern we have called Cave A.

The first one sees of Cave A is a gash in the hill about ten feet wide and forty feet long under a lip

## 12 ARTIFACTS FROM CAVES

of bare limestone. At the right extends a considerable cave with several subdivisions or chambers in which sherds were found; but the entrance to the main cave is at the left, and steeply downward. A wall of large stones had been put across most of this entrance by the ancient inhabitants, probably both to make the cave easier to defend and to keep large stones from rolling into it.

The first impression one gets of the interior of the cavern is of heavy white draperies, deeply folded. One keeps descending for some distance, with so many natural passages and chambers at each side that it is wise the first time to unroll a ball of string with one end tied behind at the opening, and to put down candle beacons every thirty or forty feet.

Some two hundred feet northeast of the entrance and sixty feet below it one comes to what I have called the "cathedral," a great round chamber under a high dome of limestone. At different levels—like second and third stories—other divisions of the cave open on one side of this, and from the floor of the third story to the roof reaches up a massive limestone pillar, perhaps twenty feet high and five feet by four in diameter. It seems at first to be the work of man, and I examined it several times before coming to the fixed conclusion that it is not. Its artificial appearance is increased by the fact that low down on its face which looks out over the "cathedral" is an opening like a mouth, with what appear to be upper and lower teeth. At first



I thought this was the open mouth of a typical Maya stone serpent, but I am convinced that these "teeth" are merely small stalactites and stalagmites, although the resemblance to a serpent's jaws is astonishing. Moreover, there were traces of burnt copal incense at the bottom of the "mouth," showing that if man did not make it for ceremonial purposes, man at least used it that way, and not so very long ago.

The old Indian who had shown this cave to my guide, Alfred August (now a small chicle contractor of Macaw Bank), some thirty years ago, told him that at that time Indians of the same tribe which had been inhabiting the cave were living only about thirty miles away in the Peten district of Guatemala.

Going back along the "third story" some eighty feet, we came to the verge of a steep precipice, about fifty feet high. With the help of ropes we managed to descend this to a creek at its base. This creek of limpid water averages about five feet wide and a foot deep for the distance of some 150 feet where it is possible to follow it, from where it enters under low rocks to where it disappears under others which blocked our passage.

When August first told me of this cave, he said he had seen "a lot of pots of different sizes by the side of the creek, each pot with a small round hole in its bottom." This apparent reference to vessels which had been "killed" naturally interested me; but alas, we could find no such cache of pottery.

## 14 ARTIFACTS FROM CAVES

August insisted that we had not found the right place, and that the creek must open out into another division of the cave somewhere, but we could not find it. I believe that we *did* reach the creek at the point where August visited it thirty years ago, and that in the meantime some one removed the pots. Imbedded in limestone under the flowing water I found, however, the saucer of plain sandy ware, 2 inches high and  $4\frac{3}{8}$  inches outside rim diameter, shown in fig. 5, *a*.

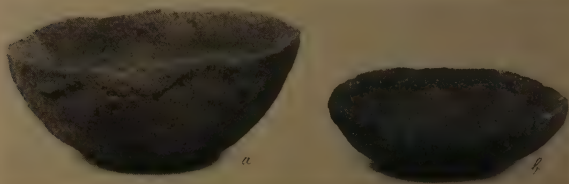


FIG. 5.—Crude vessels from caves 12 miles southeast by east of Benque Viejo, District of Cayo. Outer diameter of *a*,  $4\frac{3}{8}$  in. (16/1867, 1868)

Clambering back up the precipice to the boulder-strewn surface of the "third story," we found fragments of a polychrome vase, which as reconstructed (fig. 1, *a*) is  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches high and slightly wider at the bottom than at the top. This vase is orange-red in color, with the design outlined in black. Above a somewhat badly obliterated painting in which Dr. Morley tells me he thinks he sees the head of a god, is a band of glyphs encircling the

vessel. This appears to be a repetition of two glyphs closely joined—a large one and a small one. The small one resembles *Ben*, one of the Maya day signs, and might pass for that. The ware of this vessel is thin and smooth, the drawing well executed, and on the whole the receptacle is a closer approach to the best Maya polychrome pottery than anything else in our collection.

Like three intact vases of similar type which we were soon to find in this cave, it might be described as Maya polychrome pottery of a somewhat decadent period. The first of these three intact vessels was found by August while I was absent from the cave, and he never succeeded in definitely locating for me the niche in which he came upon it. (This is not surprising, considering that he remained with us only one day and that the rest of us found ourselves capable of quite easily becoming "lost" in the ramifications of the cavern during the week that we searched it.) This vase (fig. 6) is of smooth, rather thin red ware, and is  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches high and 6 inches in diameter, being nearly cylindrical. In a yellow band  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inch deep around the top are nine red glyphs, no two alike, and none of them decipherable now, if they ever had more than a purely decorative significance.

The other two intact vases of this type were found close together on the rocky floor of one of the innumerable small natural chambers of a cave, or labyrinth of caves. The laborer who found them

## 16 ARTIFACTS FROM CAVES

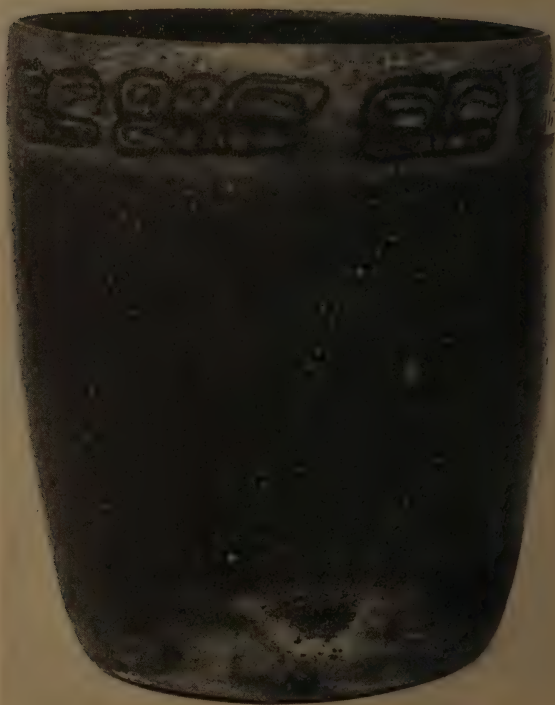


FIG. 6.—Cylindrical polychrome vase from Cave A, Rio Frio group.  
Height,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  in.

declared that each had contained a small quantity of "fine, gray ashes," which, alas, he carelessly threw away before he brought them to me. (This



FIG. 7.—Cylindrical polychrome vase from Cave A, Rio Frio group.  
Height,  $5\frac{1}{4}$  in.

sort of mishap is one of the disadvantages of trying to do a great deal of work in a short time; I could not keep my eye on each of my five men at once.)

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Of course it would be interesting to *know* that they were funerary urns. They are almost equal in size, and are slightly smaller than the vessel described in the last paragraph. The old laborer who found them called them "goblets," a word which well suits their shape. One is  $5\frac{7}{8}$  inches high and of  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches diameter (fig. 7); the color is orange. Below a black marginal line a black glyph repeated seventeen times encircles the top of the vase; below these, in four black circles of three inches diameter, are four red glyphs, or red designs which seem to suggest the serpent motive. The other vase of this pair (fig. 8, *b*) was my first choice when I divided the collection with Captain Gruning, of the British Museum, in behalf of the Colonial Government. It is 6 inches high and  $5\frac{1}{4}$  inches in diameter, of orange-yellow ware, three-sixteenths of an inch thick. At the top between black borders sixteen red glyphs encircle the vase, no glyph being repeated. The background on which they lie between the black bands is a clear yellow, a lighter tint than the body of the vase. Encircling this, half-way up the vessel, are six ovals of red, and below them three black bands, each an eighth of an inch wide, and a red one, a quarter of an inch wide, all somewhat unsteadily drawn.

I have mentioned a barrier wall of stones which had been built across the entrance of Cave A. Three similar walls, blocking entrance to inner subdivisions of the cave, had partially fallen or





FIG. 8.—Vessels from Rio Frio caves 12 miles southeast by east of Benque Viejo, District of Cayo. Height of *b*, 6 in. (16/1882, 1881)

## 20 ARTIFACTS FROM CAVES

had been partially torn down to permit ingress of visitors who had been ahead of us. Although nearly all the many "rooms" of the cave appeared

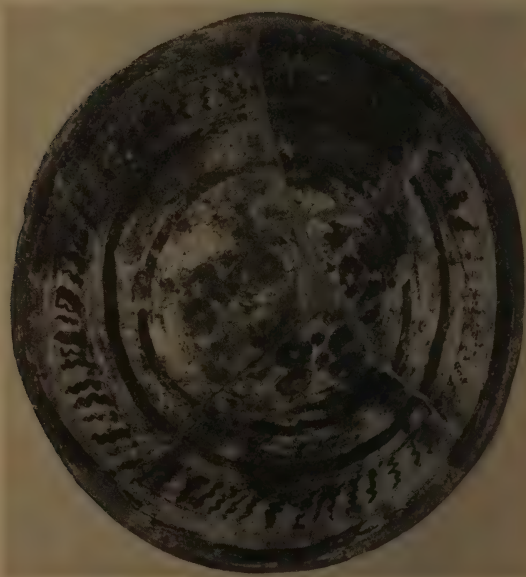


FIG. 9.—Platter from cave 12 miles southeast by east of Benque Viejo, District of Cayo. Diameter,  $10\frac{1}{8}$  in. (16/1879)

to be natural chambers, some of the passages connecting them showed evidence of man's handiwork. Many of these were very low and tortuous,

so that we were obliged to crawl on hands and knees. Two of them were too narrow to permit my entrance at all. Two of the smallest laborers were induced by a fee to enter these, each of which led into a series of low-roofed chambers containing much pottery, mostly broken. However, we managed to get nearly all the fragments of three wide,



FIG. 10.—Bowl from Cave A, Rio Frio group. Extreme diameter,  $7\frac{1}{8}$  in. (16/1878)

shallow dishes of which the one illustrated in fig. 9 is the best in point of decoration. Its inner surface is painted in a red, yellow, and black geometric design. The diameter is  $10\frac{7}{8}$  inches. Near it was found the rather pleasingly formed plain bowl,  $7\frac{7}{8}$  inches in diameter, shown in fig. 10.

Nearly everywhere in Cave A we encountered necks and other pieces of jars which had probably

## 22 ARTIFACTS FROM CAVES

been used to hold water and grain. They varied from 8 to 23 inches in height, the diameter usually nearly equaling the height and in a few cases exceeding it. They were of a thick, coarse, dark-grayish ware, unpainted, but often bore encircling punctate designs, sometimes wavy as in fig. 11. The rim diameter of this specimen is  $7\frac{7}{8}$  inches. Some bear eyelets under the neck to facilitate



FIG. 11.—Sherd of a jar from Cave A, Rio Frio group. Diameter of rim,  $7\frac{7}{8}$  in. (16/1841)

carrying with a cord like the example seen in fig. 12, an olla  $13\frac{7}{8}$  inches high. There seems to be no standardized type of lip and neck. Fig. 13 shows a jar whose neck has an outside diameter, across the lips, of only  $5\frac{7}{16}$  inches, and fig. 27, *b*, shows a similar vessel with a measurement of  $4\frac{9}{16}$  inches, while the example in fig. 14 has a rim diameter of  $17\frac{3}{8}$  inches. Other specimens are seen in figs. 15

and 16. None of these ollas have legs, but some of them have circular bases like that seen in fig. 17.



FIG. 12.—Symmetrical jar from Cave A, Rio Frio group. Height,  $13\frac{1}{8}$  in. (16/1884)

Only one of these large jars was encountered entirely intact, and that lay in a small room at the end of one of the very narrow burrows above mentioned. My two smallest laborers had quite a task rolling it out ahead of them without breaking it.

## 24 ARTIFACTS FROM CAVES

There is no doubt that some of these tight passages have been made smaller by the accumulation of water-deposited earth on their floors. Yet I can account for the presence of this large olla in its



FIG. 13.—Part of vessel from Cave A, Rio Frio group. Outer diameter of rim,  $5\frac{7}{8}$  in. (16/1850)

remote chamber only by the probability that some former opening, giving easier access to the spot where we found it, has been blocked by a fall of limestone.

Five other large ollas, unhurt save for small



breaks, I cached in the bush, having insufficient boxes and mules to carry them to Cayo with me. Later from Belize I telegraphed my Cayo foreman



FIG. 14.—Part of vessel from Cave A, Rio Frio group. Outer diameter of rim,  $17\frac{3}{16}$  in. (16/1848)

to get them. Although he was quite familiar with their proportions, he took with him only gasoline cases of inadequate size; whereupon he resorted to the expedient of cutting the jars into halves with

## 26 ARTIFACTS FROM CAVES

a machete! To make matters worse, the halves were much further broken in shipment to Belize.



FIG. 15.—Jar from Cave A, Rio Frio group. Height, 9 in.  
(16/1883)

An interesting feature of Cave C, which is less than a mile from Cave A, is that we found in it no olla or piece of olla like those which were so common in Cave A—so common indeed that they suggest a long and crowded human occupancy of that rocky

retreat. The nearest thing to it from Cave C is illustrated in fig. 18, *c-e*, three sherds shown below two fragments of characteristic jar necks (*a, b*) from



FIG. 16.—Incomplete jar from Cave A, Rio Frio group. Extreme diameter,  $7\frac{9}{16}$  in. (16/1851)

Cave A. The specimen shown in *a* has the solid, incised wavy line which we frequently found in both single and double form on sherds from Cave C (fig. 18, *c-e*). The punctate decoration was much more common on Cave A pottery, however. Further-

## 28 ARTIFACTS FROM CAVES

more, the Cave C sherds are distinctly lighter in color.

Cave C, open wide and high at each end, is illuminated by daylight throughout the nearly four



FIG. 17.—Jar from Cave A, Rio Frio group. Diameter of base, 4 in.  
(16/1856)

hundred yards of its length. It has an air of well-proportioned spaciousness, suggesting a huge Gothic cathedral. We discovered it in following upstream the tumbling little Rio Frio, in the cañon of which it is found.

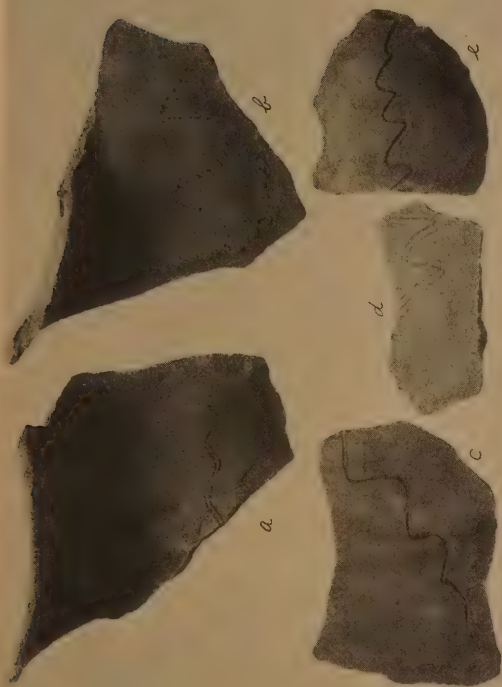


FIG. 18.—Sherds from caves 12 miles southeast by east of Benque Viejo, District of Cayo. Length of *d*,  $3\frac{1}{4}$  in. (16/1832, 1833)

## 30 ARTIFACTS FROM CAVES

From where we entered the cave, that is, at its downstream opening, it extends a little east of north, or about twenty degrees. In the middle the great natural tunnel swings to sixty degrees. We entered on the southeasterly side of the river, the right bank as one goes upstream, under a yawning lip of bare limestone 150 feet above. The ground rises sharply from the creek and the cave widens to about 250 feet just inside this entrance, leaving considerable space on each side above highwater mark which human beings might occupy. This is wider on the southeasterly side than on the northwesterly, and here were found most of the evidences of former human occupancy which we ultimately discovered.

At the very entrance on this side is a big rock with barely room between it and the wall of the cave for a man to pass to reach a hole in the wall. This opening is waist-high above the floor of the cave, and I could not crawl into it until I had broken off some sharp four-inch stalactites which threatened to rake the back of any one attempting to crawl the nine and a half feet that this apparently natural passage extends before it opens into a cavity about thirty feet long and from three to ten feet wide, but averaging only four and a half feet high. To reach the floor of this little cavern one drops down from the floor of the passage about the distance that one finds it necessary to raise oneself to get into the passage at its outer end. Moreover,



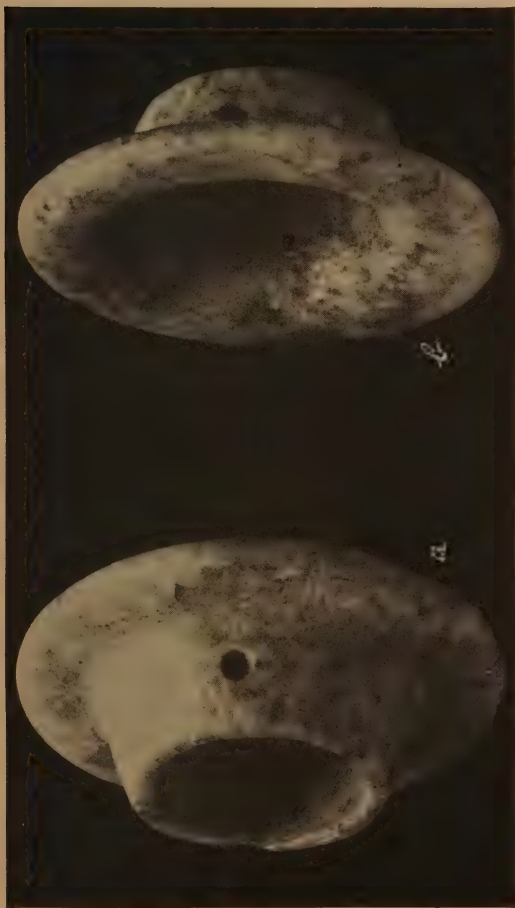


FIG. 19.—Jadeite ear-plug from tomb in Cave C, Rio Frio group. Exact size.

## 32 ARTIFACTS FROM CAVES

the opening from the passage into this chamber was too small for all of us except "Chinda," a diminutive Nicaraguan of enviable energy and courage.

After worming through this hole, "Chinda" scratched about on the dirt floor of the chamber a minute and then passed out to me the jadeite ear-plug shown in fig. 19. Its greatest diameter is  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches, and it is pierced on opposite sides of the narrow collar just beneath the flaring lip. "Chinda" searched vainly for its mate, but he soon found the smaller flat jadeite ear-plug, with outside diameter of  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inch and inside diameter of  $\frac{7}{16}$  inch, shown in fig. 20, *c*. He also found the pendant, made of a stone with which I am unfamiliar, illustrated in the same figure (*e*): it is  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches long. "Chinda" also came upon a slightly smaller pendant of dark jadeite, and many small fragments of human bones, very far gone in disintegration.

I have little doubt that this chamber was used as a tomb. Even though the Maya were a small people, the task of pushing a corpse along that narrow passage and through the narrower inner orifice could not have been easy.

Before he finished his search in this place, "Chinda" discovered in the rather loose dirt of the floor, at depths of from two to six inches, six dishes of thick unpainted ware and of considerable similarity to one another in shape, but varying from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches high, with a top diameter of from 4 to  $7\frac{1}{2}$  inches and a bottom diameter of from 3 to  $4\frac{1}{2}$

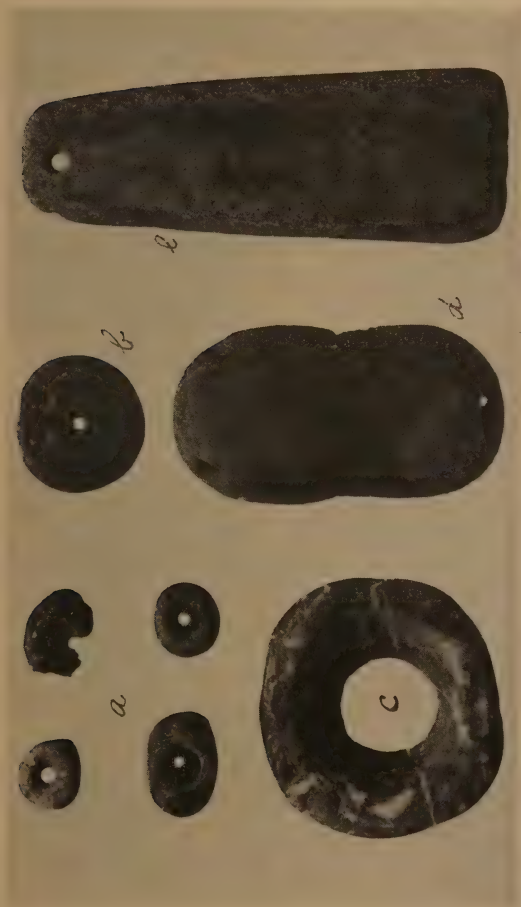


FIG. 20.—Objects from Cave C, Rio Frio group. Exact size.

## 34 ARTIFACTS FROM CAVES

inches, although in three of them the bottoms were roughly rounded and one of these had had thick tripod legs. Except that they have flaring lips, these vessels look not unlike the dishes in which our mothers baked cup custards. One is distinctly narrower than the others, and in this the lips flare

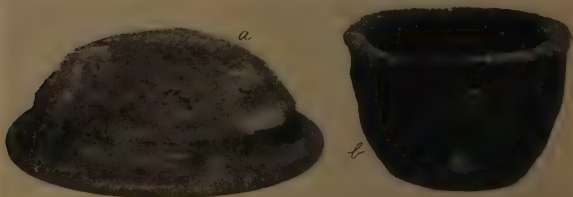


FIG. 21.—Vessels from caves 12 miles southeast by east of Benque Viejo, District of Cayo. Diameter of *a*,  $4\frac{1}{8}$  in. (16/1875, 1876)

less (fig. 21, *b*). This example resembles the vessel shown in fig. 22, *a*, found in Cave A. The broader type is exemplified by the vessel illustrated in fig. 23, *a*, and by the one in fig. 21, *a*. The piece illustrated in fig. 23, *b*, was found three inches deep in loose sand under a great boulder projecting from the side of the cave, a spot where other artifacts to be described were found also.

A few feet farther into the cave from the entrance to the tomb just described, I found a structure which I have called an altar, although I am uncertain as to its use. This was thirty feet long, nine feet

wide, and four feet high, built out from the perpendicular wall of the cave and constructed of loose stones without mortar. Some of the stones at the top were no larger than a double fist, while many



FIG. 22.—Objects from caves 12 miles southeast by east of Benque Viejo. Length of *b*,  $3\frac{3}{8}$  in. (16/1834, 1835)

at the bottom were two feet in diameter. This altar, if such it was, ends against the great hanging boulder mentioned. Under this rock a space seven by ten feet has a head clearance varying from two to three feet. Debouching into this space is a small twisting tunnel which passed through the base of the altar and was best entered from a perpendicular

## 36 ARTIFACTS FROM CAVES

shaft three feet from the farther end of the altar—a round shaft of just sufficient diameter to admit a man. Likewise the little tunnel was barely high enough and wide enough to permit me to crawl through it.

On top of the altar we found a shallow saucer much like the one we had found in the bed of the creek in Cave A. At the junction of the altar with



FIG. 23.—Vessels from cave 12 miles southeast by east of Benque Viejo, District of Cayo. Outer diameter of *a*,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  in. (16/1873, 1874)

the boulder was a considerable deposit of ashes. We took the altar down, and scattered under the end of it against the boulder, as well as through the ashes which had been outside of the altar, we found small broken pieces of worked jadeite, four jadeite beads (fig. 20, *a*) and a jadeite button (*b*). At least, this last artifact is much like a button on one side, with a depression in the center which is pierced, but the opposite side is pierced from the flat surface by two diagonal holes which emerge at the rim, reminding one of a Japanese *netsuke*.



FIG. 24.—Sherds from Cave C, Rio Frio group. Length of the largest,  $6\frac{3}{4}$  in.



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Along the wall of the cave, between the altar and the mouth of the entrance to the tomb, a distance of about thirty feet, one could tread nowhere without stepping on sherds. They were mixed with the loose sand to a depth of upward of two feet. The

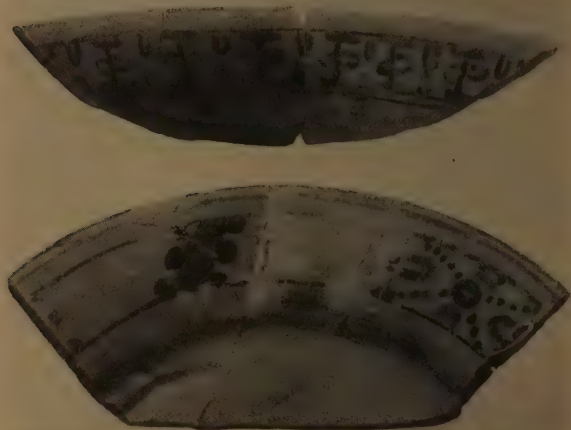


FIG. 25.—Fragments of vessels from Cave C, Rio Frio group. Extreme diameter of lower specimen,  $8\frac{5}{16}$  in. (16/1823)

majority are rough common sherds, but many bear incised designs and not a few are decorated with patterns in colors, usually red, black, and yellow, or red, black, and orange. Fig. 24 shows some examples, both of incised and polychrome sherds. Figs. 25 and 26 illustrate the inner and the outer

surface of two pieces from different vessels with interesting polychrome motives. Fig. 27, *a*, showing a rather crude black geometric design in red, was found in the same spot, as was a somewhat better piece illustrated in fig. 8, *a*.

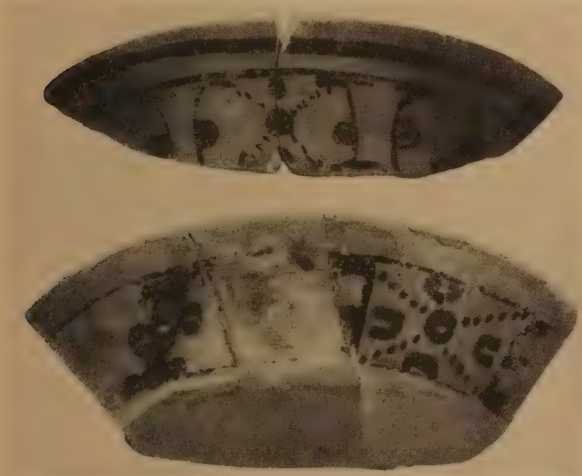


FIG. 26.—Outer sides of the fragments of the vessels shown in fig. 25

Twenty-eight inches beneath the floor of the cave, beside the big boulder already mentioned as standing just inside the downstream entrance to the cavern, we found a human skull in pieces, and a few fragments of the rest of the skeleton. There was no

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suggestion of a grave, much less of such well-made graves of limestone slabs as I had found in burial mounds at San Felipe, two miles southwest of Cayo.

Between the altar and the steep slope down to the river was a terrace, partly artificial, averaging twenty feet wide. This was littered with sherds of many kinds, and may have been a sort of kitchen-midden. From four to eight inches below the



FIG. 27.—Parts of vessels from Rio Frio caves. Outer diameter of rim of *b*,  $4\frac{3}{16}$  in. (16/1860, 1852)

surface were quantities of the shells of freshwater snails. The one polychrome sherd and the three sherds with embellishments in high relief, shown in fig. 28, were found here, as were the specimen illustrated in fig. 22, *b*, which is  $3\frac{5}{8}$  inches long and may be a pottery coil, and a flint core,  $5\frac{3}{16}$  inches in length (fig. 29, *a*).

On the surface of this terrace I found a limestone ball,  $2\frac{1}{4}$  inches in diameter, which may have been a

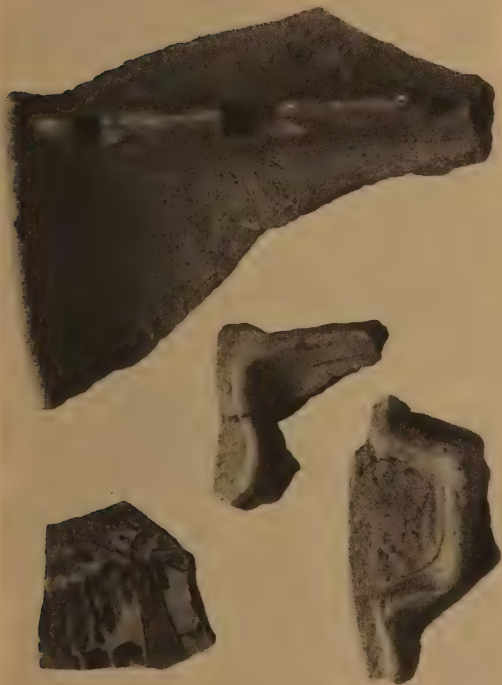


FIG. 28.—Sherds from Cave C, Rio Frio. Length of the largest,  $5\frac{3}{8}$  in. (16/1824, 1830)

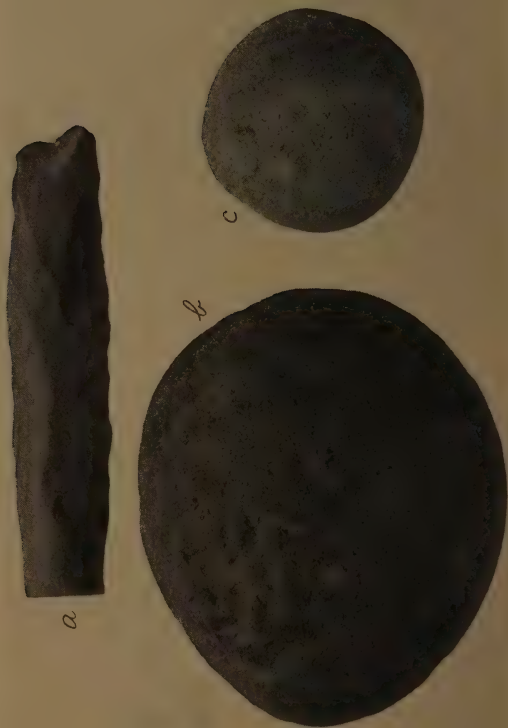


FIG. 29.—Stone objects from Cave C, Rio Frio group. Length of *a*,  $5\frac{3}{8}$  in. (16/1869, 1870)

sling-stone (fig. 29, *c*), and a ball about three times as large, of a darker stone of about an equal degree of hardness, which makes it seem rather soft for a hammerstone (fig. 29, *b*). The best things from the surface of this terrace, however, were several



FIG. 30.—Incensario from cave of the Rio Frio group. Height,  $9\frac{7}{8}$  in. (16/1855)

large fragments of two incensarios of the studded, reddish sandy ware type. The one shown restored in fig. 30 is  $9\frac{7}{8}$  inches high, and the knobs or nipples are  $1\frac{7}{8}$  inches long. In the other one they are  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches. Similar incensarios were found during the

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same season by Mr. J. Eric Thompson of the Field Museum, at a site roughly fifteen miles south by west of the Rio Frio caves.

There are many small chambers and pockets in the sides of Cave C in addition to the tomb already described. In several of these, on each side of the river, we found sherds, betokening early human existence in these lofty pockets (one was under the very roof of the cave) and suggesting comparisons with the cliff-dwellings of our Southwest.

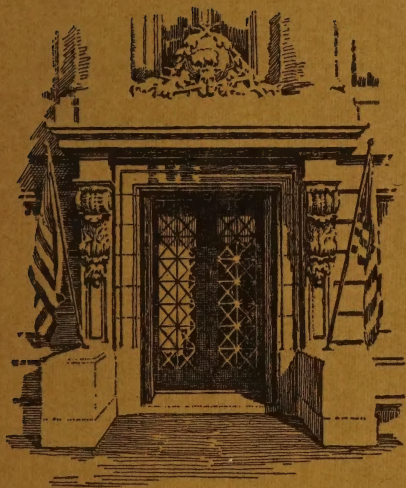
Half a dozen complete saucers of a rough undecorated sandy ware (like the one shown in fig. 5, *b*) were found in a small chamber thirty feet above the main floor and forty feet toward the center of the cave from the altar. This chamber and the others like it would have made an excellent hiding-place in time of war. These saucers are 2 inches high and  $3\frac{3}{4}$  inches in outside diameter.

On the northwest side of Cave C, that is, the side opposite the tomb and altar, the largest space suitable for human use is toward the northeastern or upstream entrance to the cavern. Here are terraces of hard-packed sand, which the prevailing easterly wind was sifting into the cave even while we were there. Excavation through several feet of drifted dust and sand here might yield something, but I believe that probably such artifacts as may yet be found in this part of the cave will be discovered in pockets along the side, for man was probably as much averse to mild but frequent sandstorms in those days as he is today.

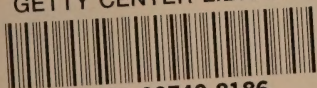


I do not like to attempt hazardous estimates as to the age of the pieces in this collection, but rather doubt if any of them are extremely early. Some of them might perhaps be called "decadent Maya First Empire polychrome," but that does not help us a great deal. The significant thing is that several pieces seem to represent interesting differences from pottery previously found in Central America. Archeologists have been inclined to regard British Honduras as a peripheral area in which the inferior cultures of collateral tribes were more or less influenced by contact with the "classical" Maya. However this may be, it seems to the writer that the results attained by the several expeditions which have labored in British Honduras during the last decade or so indicate that the pursuit of more intensive work in that colony will be amply repaid.





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